UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/930
31 August 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 30 AUGUST 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF RWANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward herewith a press release from the Office of the Vice-President of Rwanda and Minister of Defence, Major General Paul Kagame.

Bearing in mind my country's genuine security concerns, it is my hope that the information contained herein will enable members of the Security Council to understand my Government's strong commitment to the speedy and smooth implementation of the Lusaka Peace Agreement.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Joseph W. MUTABOBA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of Rwanda to the United Nations

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Annex

Press release dated 30 August 1999 from the Office of the Vice-President and the Minister of Defence of Rwanda

The Government of the Republic of Rwanda looks forward to the speedy and smooth implementation of the Lusaka Peace Agreement. The Vice-President and Minister of Defence of the Republic of Rwanda, Major General Paul Kagame, said this when addressing the National Assembly of the Republic of Rwanda this afternoon.

Vice-President Kagame reaffirmed Rwanda's commitment to the Lusaka Peace Agreement, saying aspects of it addressed both Rwanda's security concerns and the wider internal problems of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He added that the Lusaka Peace Agreement committed all signatories to the prevention and punishment of genocide, to putting an end to collaboration with and assistance to Interahamwe and to locating, identifying, disarming and deporting them. Rwanda looks forward to full compliance and cooperation from all signatories.

The Vice-President also briefed the National Assembly on the recent clashes between the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA) and the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) in Kisangani. He said that the clashes were avoidable and regretted that they had occurred between the two brotherly armies. He reminded members of the National Assembly that RPA, supporting Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) rebels, had captured Kisagani on 23 August 1998, and a subsequent agreement with UPDF two weeks later had led to joint control of the city. When Professor Wamba moved to Kisangani, his activities and relationship with UPDF created and heightened misunderstandings, which led to a shoot-out between it and the RCD Goma faction on the weekend of 7 August 1999. RPA was caught in the crossfire but maintained its defensive positions.

The clashes of 14 to 17 August 1999 between RPA and UPDF are the subject of investigations between the RPA Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Kayumba Nyamwasa, and the UPDF Commander, Major General Jeje Odongo. The Vice-President said he preferred to leave the details of what happened in Kisangani to the investigation team rather than pre-empting the report. However, he assured parliamentarians that the report would be completed soon and that they would be informed about its contents.

Vice-President Kagame assured members of the National Assembly that relations between Rwanda and Uganda have been and are good. He said the leaders of both countries regretted that not enough was done in good time to prevent the clashes. He said both countries shared a common vision of peace, stability and development in the region. He emphasized that the speedy resolution of the Kisangani clashes at the talks at Mweya Lodge on 16 and 17 August 1999 and also at Rwakitura demonstrated the good relations.

Speaking about the divisions within RCD, the Vice-President said the divisions were very unfortunate, and that Rwanda had never encouraged them. He recalled that the divisions began to emerge with the creation of the Mouvement de liberation du Congo, led by Jean-Pierre Bemba. This was contrary to Rwanda's

advice to the DRC opposition to form a united front. The divisions were exacerbated when Professor Wamba dia Wamba moved to Kisangani in circumstances difficult to understand, alienating himself from the main body of the movement based in Goma. There have been several efforts to reunite the RCD factions at meetings held in Dodoma, Dar es Salaam and Kabale.